



**Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 264
House Regulatory Reform Committee
Representative Ray A. Franz, Chair**

Submitted in writing by
Jennifer McKay, Policy Specialist
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
April 22, 2015

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, on behalf of its 2,500 plus members, urges you to vote NO on House Bill (HB) 4246, a bill that would weaken protections for Michigan's water resources, including the Great Lakes.

HB 4246 would prevent the State of Michigan from adopting environmental rules more stringent than federal standards, thereby, "handcuffing" the state in its effort to protect public health and the environment. The legislation is overly broad and would impede necessary regulatory flexibility that is vital for many programs including protection of the Great Lakes.

Federal regulations are only intended to be the lowest standard that states must meet; they are the floor that states cannot go below. Our State needs the ability to go above and beyond federal standards to protect it. We can't be kept to the same standards as other states who do not have the responsibility of stewarding over 20% of the world's fresh surface water.

In addition, federal environmental policy has significant gaps, and some federal regulations are weaker than what Michigan needs to adequately protect the State's air, water, and land. For example, in 1976, Governor Milliken issued a rule that limited the amount of phosphorus flowing into Lake Erie at a time when algae blooms threatened the survival of the Lake and the legislature was taking no action. His requirements were stricter than existing federal standards, and they are credited with saving the Lake. These rules have since been adopted by the Michigan Legislature.

We need Michigan to be allowed to make standards stricter than federal laws. As the State most defined by the Great Lakes and mighty rivers, we should be a leader in their protection and not shirk that responsibility.

If we are going to maintain the proud heritage of the "Great Lakes State" and "Pure Michigan," we must remain vigilant in our efforts to protect our most valuable resources. We hope you will

see that preventing State regulators from adopting environmental rules to provide such protection is not the best option for Michigan. **We urge you to vote NO on HB 4246.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about the comments provided, please feel free to contact me at jenniferm@watershedcouncil.org or 231-347-1181.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jennifer McKay
Policy Specialist

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